

THE
SABBATH SCHOOL VISITANT.

NUMBER FOUR.

UTICA, N. Y. SEPTEMBER 11, 1824.

ONEIDA SABBATH SCHOOL UNION.

We rejoice in being able to communicate to our readers, the interesting intelligence of the formation of this institution. The ONEIDA SABBATH SCHOOL UNION was organized on the first of September, and has now commenced operations. Its principal objects, as set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution, are, to combine the efforts of active laborers, to encourage and assist infant societies, to establish Sabbath Schools where it is thought expedient, and give greater weight and influence to the institution, where it is little known. We regret not having room to give the Constitution entire. It is, however, to be published, together with a Circular Letter, by the Corresponding Secretary, and a copy sent to each Sabbath School in the county; all of which will, we trust without delay, unite their hearts and offerings in the "Oneida Union."

The Officers of the Society, constitute a Board to manage its concerns. They have put themselves under the protection of the "American Sunday School Union."

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR ENSUING.

William Williams, *President.*

Jacob Snyder, 1st *Vice-President.*

Thomas F. Field, 2d *Do.*

Samuel M. Blatchford, *Corresponding Secretary.*

William Walker, *Recording Secretary.*

Charles Morris, *Treasurer.*

Charles Hastings, *Agent for supplying Auxiliaries with books.*

G. S. Wilson, *Agent for visiting the Schools embraced in the Union.*

This institution is to be principally supported by subscription. Fifty cents per annum entitles a person to membership. The funds will be devoted to the assistance of infant societies,—to the establishment of new schools,—and to such other objects as shall be thought expedient for the good of the Union. And we confidently trust, that the citizens of our own community, who have so long and so fully realized the benefits of the Sabbath School, will now evince their gratitude, by generously imparting to this institution, the means of extending the blessing to others.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL MONTHLY CONCERT.

The "American Sunday School Magazine," we are happy to observe, has duly noticed and appears highly to approve the proposal for a Monthly Concert for Sabbath Schools. And as this publication is the organ of the National Society, we are encouraged to hope, that that highly respectable institution, will immediately recommend to its auxiliaries and the world, the union of their prayers and offerings in a monthly concert. Respecting the time of holding the meeting, we shall cheerfully submit our own choice, to the decision of our parent institution and the public; only remarking, however, that in this part of the country, Monday Evening we think could be most conveniently devoted to the object, and on several accounts appears to us the most suitable. Several of our sister institutions in this vicinity, we are happy to announce, have already adopted the proposal, and set apart for the purpose, as we recommended, the second Monday Evening in the month.

SABBATH SCHOOL GOVERNMENT.

CONTINUED.

HAVING explained the duties of superintendents and teachers, we are now prepared to consider what should be required of the scholars,—of those for whose special benefit the school is intended, and to whose best and immortal interests, the teachers to whom they are committed, are bound unceasingly to devote themselves. These duties should in every school be particularly defined, and compliance with them, at all times, strictly exacted. Otherwise, the school will present a scene of confusion; disturbance will continually annoy the teachers; the great object will be forgotten; and little good accomplished. A teacher, then, should not only have a good *system* of regulations, but he should be careful to make them the undeviating *standard* of his government. His pupils, then, knowing what to depend on, will regulate their conduct accordingly, and so accustom themselves to a direct compliance with his requirements, that he will, in most cases, have little difficulty in establishing, at least while in the school, their habitually good behavior.

In order to treat this subject in a clear and distinct manner, we will pursue the following order.

First: A pupil should be made to know and feel, that he must always yield obedience to his teacher. This obedience cannot be secured by mere words, but by a careful vigilance, in detecting offences, and in allowing no regulation to be trespassed with impunity. Punishments should not in general be severe; but they ought, except in some few extraordinary cases, to be *sure* to follow the offence. It is a remark, verified by observation, that "the *certainty* of punishment, is ever found to operate much more powerfully upon offenders, in preventing them from crime, than the *probable greatness* of it." We would wish not to be understood, as forbidding in the teacher the exercise of kindness to his pupils.—Every action, even of severest discipline, should breathe a spirit of kindness and love. Nor would we deprive him altogether of the privilege of *pardoning* offences.—A judicious pardon may often have a much happier and more lasting influence, than a judicious punishment. It may give the pupil a greater confidence in his teacher, and unite them together more closely in the bonds of affection. But we would object to a teacher's *overlooking* offences, or letting them pass unheeded. This will have a sure tendency to destroy the foundation of his discipline, and reduce his authority to a name. Pardons, however, should be granted only with discretion.—The pupil should express a hearty penitence for his fault, and the teacher should forgive in such a manner, as to convince him that it is a pardon, generously and freely offered.—*To be continued.*

THE presumption of youth hopes all things from itself, and, however impotent, believes it has power over every event: it dreams of security in the midst of danger, and listens to subtilty without suspicion.—*Telemachus.*

For the Visitant.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.—No. 2.

The writer of these Essays, does not intend to present any new system of instruction, or even to offer any new ideas on the duties of the Sabbath School Teacher. He believes that teachers generally, are not so deficient in a knowledge of their duties, as they are in a disposition to perform them. If any thing can be advanced, then, to *remind* them of these duties,—of their interesting relation to the children under their guidance, and of their *solemn responsibility*,—his principal object will be accomplished.

A teacher should become acquainted with the individual characters of his pupils. This will appear indispensable when we consider the variety of dispositions and talents, that exists, as well among children as among adults, and the different kind of management that is necessary, in order to make himself equally profitable to all. An explanation that is perfectly understood by one, will appear dark and unintelligible to another. While one is affected by persuasions and promises, another must be treated with severe discipline. Exercise severity towards one, and you only wound his feelings, and thus perhaps close the only avenue by which you might gain an entrance to his heart. Another can only be urged on by spurs and threats to that attention to his duties which his improvement demands. One is possessed of a natural loveliness of character, which gives you the perfect control of his feelings. Another is sullen and refractory, and will call into exercise all your patience and forbearance. But by a proper discrimination of their characters, you may learn to use, to the best advantage, the mildness of the one, and to bring under the more sober influence of judgement and reason, the waywardness of the other.

One thing the teacher should guard against with peculiar vigilance. The importance that is often attached to the mere getting of a lesson in the Scriptures, and the encomiums and rewards which they receive for doing well, not unfrequently beget a kind of self-sufficiency, and a disposition to be satisfied with the mere knowledge of the Bible, without any saving application of its truths. They should be taught, that knowledge, without the grace of God, will only increase in an appalling ratio, the sufferings of the bottomless pit. The inefficiency of the external duties of religion, in themselves considered, the necessity of repentance for sin, of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of an absolute change of heart, should be urged upon their immediate attention; and, as was mentioned in a former essay, after a teacher has done all this for his pupils, he must present their case before the mercy-seat. Every Christian will acknowledge the duty of prayer. But it is to be feared, that many teachers in Sabbath Schools, either neglect altogether, or very rarely and very coldly perform, the duty of praying for the children entrusted to them. Suppose you have spent years in instructing a class—suppose you have carried them from Genesis to Revelation, and have illustrated and enforced every important truth in the Bible,—after all this, you have not prepared one soul for the kingdom of heaven. If the blessing of God is withheld, not one of your pupils has taken a step in the christians

course, nor are any of them, in any degree, better prepared for the exchange of worlds. It is absurd to ascribe any intrinsic efficacy to the use of means. That a man *knows* his duty well, if he has not performed it, will be a miserable plea to make at the judgement seat. As we have before seen, he may have a head well taught, and at the same time a heart as black as Lucifer's. Hence the necessity that this knowledge should be sanctified by the grace of God. And the usual medium through which God bestows his grace, is, the prayer of his saints. Let teachers then engage more fervently in this indispensable duty. Let them *act* with more energy, and *pray* with more humility. Let them feel more confidence in the use of means, but let them leave the event in the hands of him who can give efficiency to the weakest efforts, and "turn the hearts of men even as the rivers of water are turned." N. T.

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SABBATH SCHOOLS.—We are happy to learn from a friend who has recently made a tour on agency, in neighboring towns and counties, that in most of the societies which he visited, a spirit of engagenedness in Sabbath Schools is strikingly manifest, and in every place the *VISITANT* meets with a grateful reception. In Auburn, Lenox, Clinton, Rome, Whitesborough, New-Hartford, Hampton, Vernon, Deerfield, Sangersfield, Madison, Shurburne, Oxford, Cooperstown, Cherry-Valley, Springfield, Galway, Saratoga Springs, and Schenectady, we are happy to state, this blessed institution is flourishing. In several of these places, the schools are large, and the teachers manifest a zeal worthy the dignity of their enterprize. Our correspondent observes, and it is well worthy of remark, that in most of the above places, pious females compose the most numerous part of the active and efficient laborers in this garden of the Lord.—May they persevere in this goodly work! May these heaven-born institutions become the habitations of piety, and grow up and flourish like the cedars of Lebanon!

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FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

A few days since I was travelling westward from Albany, in company with a friend. Passing a district school house, and in the vicinity of a Sabbath School, we observed just before us a group of little children, apparently very young, sitting by the way side, in the shade of a wide-spreading tree. As we drew near them, we observed their little hands folded upon their laps, all in a pensive mood, with their glistening eyes towards Heaven, and all with one voice repeating something: what it was, we were not able at first to determine, on account of the noise of our carriage; and for fear of embarrassing them, we did not stop; but by moving somewhat slower, and in the mean time listening as though we listened not, to catch some distinct sound—while at the same time they turned their eyes toward us as though they saw us not, we soon discovered the meaning of this little concert. They were with one voice lisping a hymn to the "Babe of Bethlehem." The notes were "sweet as angels use," and the lingering sounds, echoing through the woods, died away upon the ear, leaving an impression altogether indescribable.

"CASTING BREAD UPON THE WATERS."

THE prejudices which many have against the benevolent operations of the present day, usually arise from ignorance of their effects. I have seldom known a candid man to dislike them after seeing their tendency. A few years since, I knew a man strongly prejudiced against most of our benevolent Societies. He was respected, and was usually agreeable and polite. But when an Education Society or a Sabbath School was mentioned, he made no scruples in manifesting his antipathy. It so happened, that one summer, a student from College, a charity scholar, established a Sabbath School in the neighborhood of this gentleman. As he was winning in his manners, he soon collected all the children in the vicinity, except the only child of this man, who for some weeks, refused to permit his little daughter, a lovely child of eight years old, to attend the school. But as all her playmates attended, and were delighted with the privilege, and as no bad consequences were seen to result from their instructions, by entreaties, and by a kind request from her mother, it so happened, that on the fifth Sabbath after the School was opened, little Clarissa — was at School, with her blithe rosy countenance, happy among her companions. She continued to attend regularly through the summer and to improve very rapidly. The teacher of the school encouraged his little pupils to make any inquiries about the texts of scripture which they could not understand. It was at the close of a pleasant Sabbath in August, when the father called the child to him, and addressed her very mildly, "Clarissa, my dear, are you not tired of going to that Sunday School? I don't think you learn any thing—I mean nothing that you understand." "O yes, father, I do, a great many things! for to-day I asked my teacher about that beautiful text, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days;'" and what, father, do you think it means? "Why, child, it means that we ought to be charitable to the poor." "Yes, father, but do you know *why* it is like casting bread on the waters?" "No, my dear." "Well, my teacher explained it to me. He said that in the Eastern country, rice, and all kinds of grain, are called bread, even before they are cooked. He said, that every year the river Nile, and so of some other Eastern rivers, rose up high, and had its waters overflow its banks, and all the country round. While the waters were thus covering the country, the people went out in their little boats, and scattered their rice, (or bread) on the waters. This was sowing it. It sunk down in the mud; the waters covered it. Yet the people knew it was not lost; for in due time the waters went off, and then the rice sprung up, and they usually had great crops. This is casting bread upon the waters: and true charity is just like it. Is'n it a beautiful verse, father?" "Yes." "And don't I learn and understand what my teacher tells me?" "You may go and tell it to your mother, my dear."

Towards the close of the summer, the teacher was taken sick, and was obliged to leave his Sabbath School and College. As he was indigent, the ladies of the neighborhood kindly made him up a small purse, to bear his expences. One evening little Clarissa

came to her father with a very earnest look, and says, "Father, will you please to give me a nine-pence?" "What will you do with it, my dear?" "O, I want it very much, and will not waste it, father." "But what do you want it for?" "I wish father would please give it to me without asking—I do want it very much." "I can't give my daughter money unless she tells me to what use she is to apply it?" "Well, father, I fear you will not give it to me, but I will tell you. You know that Mr. ——, my School Teacher, is sick, and must go away. O he has been so kind to me. He is going away, and I am afraid I shall never see him again—I wanted to give him the nine-pence! you remember how he explained to me that beautiful text, "Cast thy bread upon the waters." The little girl sobbed, and a tear stood in the eye of the father. He put a bank note in the hand of his child for her sick teacher, and turned aside and wept. He thought how he had been taught a lesson of charity by his little child; how he had opposed the very school where she had been thus instructed; and how he had ever been supremely selfish, and sinful. From that hour he became awakened, and was in great anxiety of mind for some time. He then found peace in believing. He is now a firm friend of Education Societies and Sabbath Schools; and never thinks of either without thinking of the teacher whom he opposed—of his daughter's improvement—and of his own hopes of immortality.

Christian Almanack for 1825.

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LITTLE HARRIET AND HER SQUIRREL.—*Selected.*

It was Sabbath eve, when at a friend's, we were all sitting in the piazza, conversing about the exertions now making for the heathen. It was a lovely evening and the conversation most interesting. "Father," said little Harriet, after listening a long time to our conversation,—"Father do these little heathen children wish to learn to read the Testament?" "Many of them are very anxious for this, and all would be anxious did they know its value." "But father, have they all got Testaments, if they did know how to read?" "No, my dear, few of them only ever heard any thing about the Testament—about God—about Jesus Christ!" "Will half a dollar buy one Testament, for one little heathen girl?" "It would." "Oh!" sighed the little Harriet, "how I wish I had a half a dollar! Father may I sell any thing I have got, if I can get half a dollar?" "Yes," said the father smiling at his daughter's simplicity. The conversation here ended.

Almost every child has a toy of which he is peculiarly fond. Harriet's toy was a beautiful tame grey squirrel, which she had brought up, to which she was excessively attached. It would eat from her hand—attend her in her rambles, and sleep on her pillow. The pretty little Jenny, for this was its name, was suddenly taken sick. The little girl nursed it with every care, and shed many a tear over it as it died on her pillow in her lap. Her father endeavored in vain to console her—assuring her that Jenny was now insensible to any pain or trouble. "The end of its life has arrived, and it is now no more: but when my little daughter comes to die, if she is a good girl, her immortal spirit will only leave this world to wing its way

to a world happier than this. Be comforted, my daughter, or you will make your father unhappy. Why do you grieve so?" "Father," said the weeping Harriet, "did I not love my squirrel?" "Yes." "Did you not say I might sell any thing I had for half a dollar, and send a Testament to the heathen children?" "Yes." "Well I was going to sell my pretty squirrel to Mr. —, who was to give me half a dollar for it, and I was going to send a Testament to the heathen; but now my Jenny is dead." She ceased, her speech being choked by her sobs. The father was silent—a tear stood in his eye—he put a silver dollar in his daughter's hand,—and the little girl dried her tears, rejoicing that Jenny's death would be the means of sending *two or three* Testaments to the heathen, instead of one.



THE LITTLE GIRL AND HER FATHER.—Mr. —, was once a respectable and industrious man; but through the influence of his evil companions, he yielded to the temptation of liquor, and soon became a poor, worthless, and miserable being.

If he had been the only person that suffered, the evil would have been comparatively small; but he had an affectionate family, who were rendered miserable by this change in his character. He no longer labored to provide for them, but spent most of the day in the grog shop; at night returning home, full of cursing and bitterness—consuming the provisions his wife had procured—cursing her because she had no more, and thus depriving the distressed family of the last morsel of bread.

While the family were in this condition, they were visited by a friend—the children's friend, who invited their little girl to attend the Sabbath School. With her mother's consent she entered the school; and very soon was able to read, and in some measure to understand the Scriptures. One Sabbath morning as she was preparing for school, her father (as he had frequently done before,) began quarrelling with her mother, and said in an angry tone, which made the little girl tremble—"Wife, there is no need of making all this fuss about Sabbath Schools; Mary shall not go there any more—she learns nothing." Her mother began to plead in behalf of the school, and her father became still more enraged; when the little girl stepped between them, the tears rolling down her cheeks, and said, "Father I do learn at the Sabbath School." After cursing her, he asked "What do you learn?" She replied, "Father, I have learned what God says about those that *swear, and get drunk, and break the Sabbath.*" He then asked her what God said about such persons? She ran and brought her little bible; and turning it over, read to him from the sacred volume, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."—"And Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Conviction immediately seized upon his conscience, and he fell upon the floor, exclaiming "Oh what shall I do—what shall I do to be saved? He was led to the arms of a gracious Savior, and we are assured that he is now pursuing the path of duty, and that every Sabbath morning he takes his little daughter by the hand, and leads her to the Sabbath School.

Communicated.

INTERESTING ACCOUNT FROM A SUPERINTENDENT.

I was (says he,) one Sunday afternoon about to close the School in which I was engaged, when a well dressed, genteel person, who presented himself as a visitor, requested me to allow him (if it would not be deemed an intrusion) to speak to the children; this being readily granted; he addressed them nearly to the following effect:

"There was once a poor lad, who was noted even among his sinful companions for his wickedness, but especially for his swearing and sabbath-breaker. He, along with some others, resolved one Sunday to follow and peep some steady boys who were going to their school. However it so happened, that the lads on being attacked, took to their heels; this lad followed them to the very door of the school, which, when opened, (they were then singing) such a sound came from the place, as seemed to stun him. He wondered what they could be doing in the inside; and a teacher at that moment admitting the other boys, invited him in. A new scene now opened itself upon him, near 300 boys seated with their teachers; they all appeared so neat and clean, and in such order, he wished he was 'one.' He stood for some time a spectacle for the whole school,—dirty and ragged, and with his wooden clogs on, which, whenever he stirred, made him the object of every person, to his great shame and mortification. After some consultation, he being a stout good looking lad, it was resolved to admit him, and he was put into the ABC Class, though it was found he was not fit even for this place. Every thing was new to him. The next Sunday he appeared; his hair was combed, his face was washed, but his clogs still remained to mortify him; his particular case was taken into consideration, and a pair of shoes was given him. He now found himself so much behind the other boys, that he resolved to strain every nerve to get up to them. This determination was the means of his rising to the very First Class when his conduct being so much approved of, he was chosen a Teacher. He now felt he had something more to do than to teach,—he had a soul to save; in a little time he was enabled after much prayer, to 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' and to rejoice in HIS salvation. The Lord then called him to preach these 'glad tidings,' and happening some time after to preach within 20 miles of his old much loved school, he rode hard after his morning's labor, and reached the place just in time to see the poor lads in his own, very own school; and here he is now speaking to you!"

"The scene now became truly affecting; he burst into tears, as did several others around him; at last, he sobbed out—'Oh! my dear lads, be in right good earnest to make the most of your very great Sunday School privileges: I have kept you too long—God bless you all!' He then concluded with a most affecting prayer.

SABBATH SCHOOL INCIDENT.—A short time since, a young woman called on the Superintendent of the Sabbath School in this village, to inquire concerning the best method of conducting a Sabbath School. The Superintendent was pleased with the inquiry, and gave her the necessary information and assistance. This young woman had formerly belonged to the school in this village, where she had been instructed in those things, by which, we trust, she has been made wise unto salvation. By the providence of God, however, she was removed from the school, and from the religious privileges which she had here enjoyed. Her lot was cast among a people mostly strangers to the way of life.—But her lamp was not gone out. Casting an eye over these children of wretchedness, she remembered the Sabbath School; on the Lord's day, she invited them around her; and now, from Sabbath to Sabbath, is she instructing about twenty immortal souls for the kingdom of heaven. Teachers, be encouraged: you may be preparing your pupils for great usefulness; and "in due season you shall reap, if you faint not."